

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 IO-10 OC-05 CCO-00 OCL-00

A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /089 W

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P R 021305Z JAN 76

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3755

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

COMNAVTELCOM WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN

COMIDEASTFOR

NAVCOMMUNIT ASMARA

NAVCOMMSTA NEA MAKRI

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0007

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJ: RECENT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN ERITREA

REF: ASMARA 0006

1. DURING LAST FEW DAYS THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF MILITARY ACTIONS IN THREE DIFFERENT LOCATIONS IN ERITREA. ONE ENGAGEMENT IS REPORTED NEAR AGRICULTURAL ESTATE AT ELABORET AS RESULT OF WHICH ROAD TO KEREN IS SAID TO BE BLOCKED. SECOND ACTION IS IN VICINITY OF TERAMNI, 30 KM SOUTH OF ASMARA ALONG ASMARA-ADI UGRI ROAD. THERE IS RELIABLE INFORMATION THAT 350 TRUCK CONVOY WHICH LEFT ASMARA EARLY MORNING OF JAN. 1 AND RETURNED LATE THAT DAY, WAS FORCED TO RETURN TO ASMARA AS RESULT OF THIS ENGAGEMENT. THIRD ACTION IS 15 KM SOUTHWEST OF ASMARA NEAR VILLAGE OF ABARDA
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AND SOUNDS OF BOMBING AND EXPLOSIONS CAN BE HEARD IN ASMARA.

AIR ACTIVITY HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY HEAVY DURING THIS WEEK AND NIGHT BOMBING APPARENTLY IS CONTINUING WITH GREATER FREQUENCY.

2. OFFICERS OF SECOND DIVISION HAVE BEEN VERY ACTIVE IN EFFORT TO OBTAIN POWER AND WATER FOR TRACTS TX AND CHARLIE. THEY ARE REPORTEDLY APPLYING CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE ON EELPA (ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY) AND ON MUNICIPALITY TO PROVIDE WATER. LIKEWISE THEY HAVE REQUESTED PA&E (DOD-CONTRACTORS) TO ASSIST IN SUPPLYING WATER TO TRACT CHARLIE. WATER SYSTEM TO CHARLIE IS PUMPED FROM TRACT ECHO TO TRACT BRAVO AND THEN TO CHARLIE. TO DATE, KAGNEW HAS BEEN ABLE TO FORESTALL THIS REQUEST, AS NO ONE IS ANXIOUS FOR KAGNEW TO ENLARGE ITS SHARE OF LOCAL UTILITY MARKET.

3. THERE ARE ALSO SOME MYSTIFYING DEVELOPMENTS IN COMMAND STRUCTURE IN ERITREA. BG WORKU MAKONNEN TOLD CONGEN IN EARLY DECEMBER THAT HE EXPECTED TO DEPART FOR HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT IN ADDIS (REPORTEDLY AS CO OF ETHIOPIAN GROUND FORCES) IN MID-DECEMBER. HE IS, HOWEVER, STILL IN ASMARA AND IS CURRENTLY FILLING-IN FOR BG GETACHEW WHO WORKU SAYS IS IN ADDIS. IN MEETING JAN. 2 WITH WORKU (REFTEL HE WAS EXTREMELY VAGUE IN RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HE SAID HE WOULD REMAIN IN ASMARA UNTIL GETACHEW "COMPLETES A PROJECT HE IS INVOLVED IN". COL. TELEHUN, WHO GETACHEW TOLD CONGEN WOULD BE REPLACING WORKU AT LEAST TEMPORARILY AS CO OF EPMG FORCES IN ERITREA, HAS MOVED IN WORKU'S RATHER PLUSH OFFICE WITH ALL HIS PERSONAL MEMENTOS OBVIOUSLY THERE TO STAY. YET DURING THIRD WEEK IN DECEMBER, RADIO ASMARA ANNOUNCED THAT TELEHUN WOULD REPLACE WORKU AS ACTING CO ONLY TO RETRACT STATEMENT LATER SAME DAY, WITHOUT FURTHER AMPLIFICATION. MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT WITHIN EPMG MILITARY IS IMMINENT, BUT NO ONE CAN PUT THEIR FINGER ON IT.
WAUCHOPE

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